

## FARM MANAGEMENT TRAINING

"Suggestions  
for  
Teaching Adult Farmers"

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### Need a Sensitivity for People and the Use of Proper Teaching Methods

A teacher in adult farm management work as any other effective teacher, must realize that he is dealing with people in real life situations. Teaching must relate to the already acquired knowledge of his students. To be most effective the teacher needs:

- (1) A comprehensive knowledge of his subject;
- (2) To know the nature of his students' problems;
- (3) To know some of the alternatives;
- (4) A knowledge of practical solutions;
- (5) Enthusiasm and a desire to help.

Agriculture is specializing and using new techniques, and so must farm management educators. To meet the needs of the highly specialized farmer today requires a highly trained teacher. A continuing education program is one of:

- (1) Working with people, not for them;
- (2) Helping people become self-reliant not dependent on others;
- (3) Making people the central actors, not the spectators.

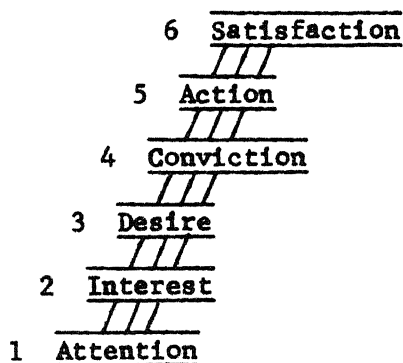
The educated man is the one who learned how to educate himself; so we must do a better job of helping farmers teach themselves. We do this by teaching him how to make better management decisions through his understanding and his ability to apply the appropriate economic business principles to varied problem situations. The training should also improve the farmers':

- (1) Record keeping abilities. Records are essential as a source of useful facts for analysis and planning of the business. They enable all parties: operators, wife, banker, and advisor to better understand the business.
- (2) Skills in budgeting, planning, and effective action.
- (3) Determination to use the pencil more--based on the conviction that it pays.

### Essentials of Motivation

One must realize that motivation is basic both to learning and to teaching. Some of the motivations are: desire for more economic security, desire for new ideas or ways of doing things, and/or desire for recognition.

The teacher must be aware of these steps in effective teaching:



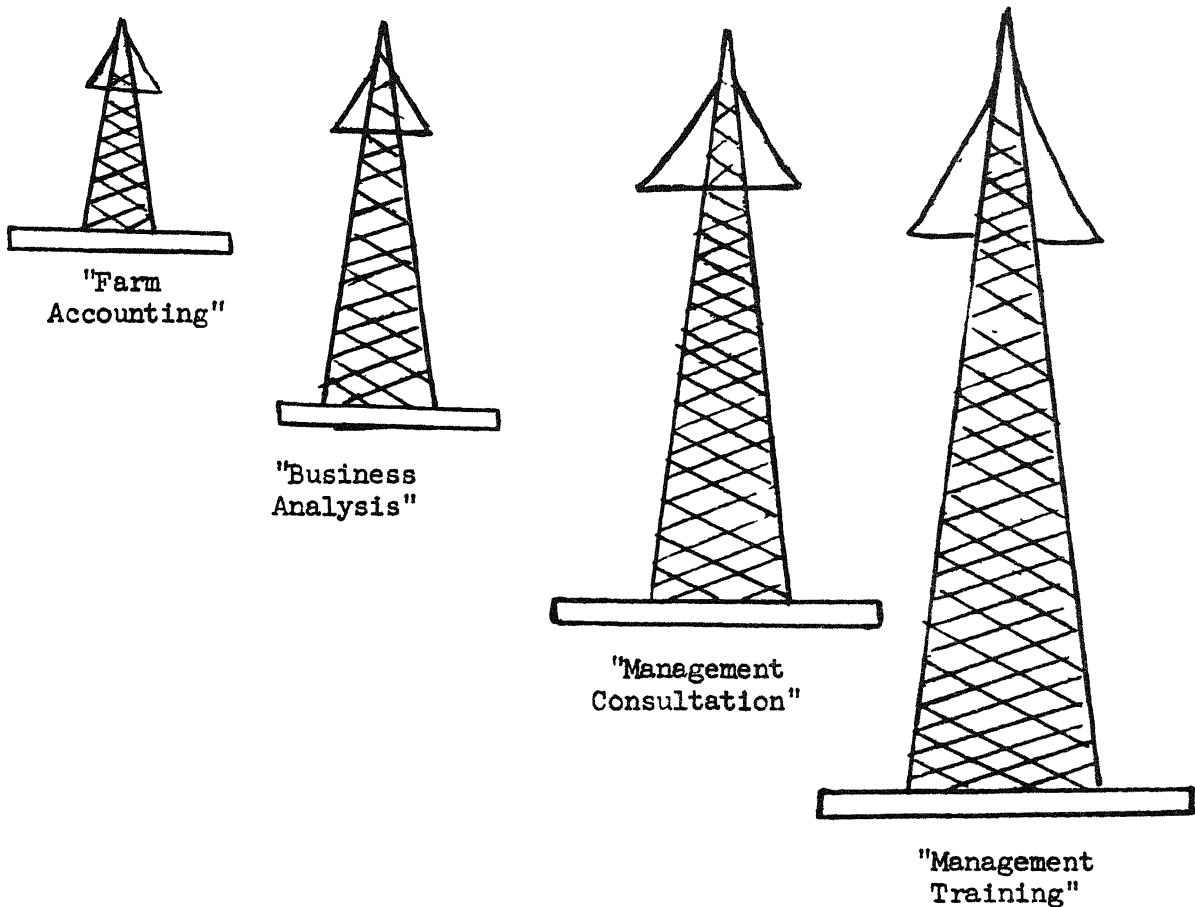
In farm management as in other areas of teaching, adequate time must be spent in developing a clear picture of why a certain practice or method is important. Once a farmer clearly understands why, teaching him how is the small end of the job. We know that people learn by adding to their past experiences, by imitating others or by following advice of others in whom they have confidence.

A farm management tour to the farms of successful men, who also have the confidence of others in a community may be more effective than any other method of instruction. However, lining up an effective tour takes a lot more time and effort. One must let the method fit the group situation.

Computer technology has much to offer in present day farm business decision making processes. It not only has self teaching aspects, but a tremendous tool in analysis and planning.

Content of Management Educational Program for Farmers

A. Four main areas of emphasis:



The size of the above figures corresponds to comparative amount of time that should be spent by teachers in farm management in different areas. The order from left to right is the priority rank in working with farm groups. In other words adequate farm records is a necessity before business analysis, consultation, and training can take place to best advantage.

3. Principles, understandings, and facts outlined below which are part of the above four main areas of emphasis:

1. Steps in Management

- a. Observation--collect information
- b. Analysis and determining possible alternatives
- c. Decision--deciding what alternative is best
- d. Action--putting into operation the chosen alternative
- e. Acceptance of consequences

2. Economic principles that need to be understood

- a. Diminishing returns
- b. Maximum profit point
- c. Equi-marginality (opportunity cost)
- d. Substitution
- e. Risk
- f. Fixed, variable costs
- g. Competitive and Complementary
- h. Time Utility

3. Learn facts regarding management problems such as:

- a. Leases
- b. Partnerships, Father-Son Agreements
- c. Credit
- d. Insurance-life, property, liability
- e. Records
- f. Income Tax
- g. Social Security
- h. Estate Planning
- i. Trends and price outlook
- j. Adjustment programs
- k. Appraisal facts
- l. Custom rates
- m. Input-output data

4. Develop more knowledge and understanding in the following farm economic relationships:

- a. Enterprise budgets
- b. Economics of scale data
- c. Farm organization plans
- d. Labor efficiency
- e. Optimum number and kind of livestock
- f. Optimum acres and kind of crops
- g. Farm Business Analysis
- h. Making use of outlook information
- i. Production timing

C. Methods and activities for carrying out farm management objectives

1. Teacher training workshops
2. Farm management schools for agricultural producers conducted by specialists and/or agents-teachers
3. Farm visits
4. Farm management tours
5. Use mass media
6. Special meetings on specific topics as determined by farm advisory committees and various cooperating agencies
7. Meet with other subject matter specialists and research staff on enterprise or industry problems and participate with them on joint activities.

D. Evaluation

We evaluate so that we can have some measure of the desirable and undesirable outcomes of our educational programs as they move toward goals or objectives established. This is an important step in improvement and progress, but evaluation requires determination and planned procedures on the part of a teacher. "Good teaching results from a blueprint, not scatter firing--from a plan, not trial and error."

Essential to Involve Other Subject Matter Specialists

The complexity of technology required today, and the economic environment in which the farmers are operating complicate decision making. An unwise decision can mean severe losses, and even business failure for the farmer. This has vital implications for the teacher of farm management as to the accuracy and soundness of information he disseminates. The many interrelated factors involved in adapting technology to an individual situation further complicates the picture. Consequently teachers of farm management are not

only having to broaden their own perspective and essential considerations, but are finding it increasingly necessary to involve other subject matter specialists in the development of programs in their own field. New situations call for new tools and techniques.

Teachers in the production areas are also realizing more than ever that physical efficiencies are important, but an economic analysis to evaluate the dollar and cent efficiency is essential. There are very few farm production problems that don't have some economic consequence. Therefore, other disciplines need to be aware of the latest in economic analysis techniques and likewise the management teachers need to include the latest production technology in their teaching program.